

TOURISM IN MEXICO WORKING ON FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS



In 2017, Mexico received 39 million foreign tourists. This year the authorities expect the number to exceed 42 million. Thanks to the increased numbers of tourism in Mexico, the country reached the seventh place in the international tourism ranking.

The industry stakeholders however call for substantial changes necessary to achieve greater tourism numbers. Tourism in Mexico will not continue to grow on its own solely because of the natural tourist attractions that the country has to offer. The industry needs to closely work with the government to improve on some aspects that may harm the main sector of the economy, as experts and the Tourism Ministry have agreed.

The main challenge for Mexico's tourism is insecurity. Some Mexican destinations are included in the U.S. travel alerts, which advise its citizens to refrain from traveling to the regions, due to insecurity and organized crime.

Among the alternatives to combat insecurity, Enrique De la Madrid, head of the Ministry of Tourism of Mexico, mentioned increasing the number of police officers and improving their working conditions, as well as undertaking some special measures in tourist destinations.

"There is a series of pointers and actions that represent our commitment in the signed agreements with Quintana Roo and Baja California Sur," De la Madrid mentioned at a tourism forum.

As a personal anecdote, De la Madrid agreed with businessmen that the legalization for recreational use of marijuana in tourist states, such as Quintana Roo and Baja California Sur, would be a positive measure against organized crime.

Having well-planned destinations in Mexican tourist destinations is another challenge to overcome, added De la Madrid. The new tourism projects in the country should be based on a good territorial planning, with sustainable development and low density.

"The new tourism in Mexico must be of lower density, more value, more respectful to the environment, and able to take advantage of the natural wonders of our country. That always pays off, and with great results," said the official.

Institutionalizing tourism promotion agencies to 'sell' Mexico's image abroad in a better light, is also key to improving the country's competitiveness compared to other destinations in the world.

"Mexico must continue to work by taking huge and innovative steps in promotion and advertising. I am convinced that the richness and positive news about the country are many and constant, but unfortunately the bad news are far easier to communicate," added Pablo Azcárraga, president of the National Tourism Business Council (CNET).

Mexico depends, to a large extent, on tourism from the United States, and with the travel alerts that were disclosed last August to Los Cabos and Cancun, it was proven how sensitive these issues really are. To protect itself, the country must improve upon its diversification.

In the last five years, travelers from South America and Asia have increased by 97% and 127%, respectively, according to data from the Ministry of Tourism.

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